

MS-179, Aeronautical Products Corporation Records

Collection Number: MS-179

Title: Aeronautical Products Corporation Records

Dates: 1920-1946 (bulk 1929-1941)

Creator: Aeronautical Products Corporation

Summary/Abstract: The Aeronautical Products Corporation was a short-lived company based in Los Angeles which manufactured beacon lights to guide aircraft. The main office holders of the corporation were Albert B. Scott, president and inventor of the beacon light, and two brothers, Thomas M. and Dushane Hyson. The collection correspondence, photographs, printed materials, advertisements, and clippings generated and received by the company and the principal individuals connected with it.

Quantity/Physical Description: 1.5 linear feet

Language(s): English

Repository:

Special Collections and Archives, Paul Laurence Dunbar Library, Wright State University, Dayton, OH 45435-0001, (937) 775-2092

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Preferred Citation:

MS-179, Aeronautical Products Corporation Records, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.

Acquisition: The collection was purchased from Charles Apfelbaum by and for the archives of Wright State University on October 28, 1987.

Other Finding Aid: The finding aid is available on the Special Collections and Archives, Wright State University Libraries' web site at http://www.libraries.wright.edu/special/collection_guides/guide_files/ms179.pdf.

Processing Information: Finding aid reformatted and revised in 2014 by Toni Vanden Bos.

Processed by: Stephen Kahn, June 9, 1988

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged into 2 series:

Series 1: Business Records, 1920-1946

Series II: Post Business Records, 1932 to 1941

Historical Note:

Incorporated on July 24, 1929, and dissolved on or about December 31, 1931, Aeronautical Products Corporation (APC) existed for only about two and a half years. With an office located at 803 Security Title Insurance Building in Los Angeles, California, its sole product, called the Distinctive Beacon, was a beacon light to guide airplanes to airfields and around obstacles such as high buildings and mountain tops. It was promoted as being unique insofar as it could flash combinations of interchangeable colors indicating a particular airfield or high building.

As far as can be gathered from the collection, few beacons were ever produced. Seemingly, all of them were for demonstrations. It also appears that the component parts were made by subcontractors and assembled at 218 Larchmont Avenue, Hollywood, California, probably the home of Albert B. Scott. The collection suggests that the patent for his invention, although applied for, was never cleared.

Three beacons were installed as demonstrators. One was located at the Grand Central Terminal in California which was the western terminal of the Maddux Airline. Sometime after the light's installation, APC was informed that the beacon could not remain there on a permanent basis. Another beacon was put on the roof of the club house of Sunset Field which was not an airfield. A third location was on top of the Austin hangar at Cleveland. This beacon was later given to the people of Cleveland where it resided on top of the Public Auditorium.

If none of the beacons were sold, it was not for the lack of effort. The collection contains documents showing APC to have been engaged in a considerable amount of advertising and marketing. Furthermore, it sent a great deal of promotional literature to prospective customers and it kept several lists of sales contacts. It is evident, however, that no beacons were sold. This is substantiated by copies of the California Franchise Tax forms which show no income for 1929, 1930, and 1931. Additionally, a letter from W.B. Mendenhall of October 28, 1931 indicates that APC did not do any business in the prior two years.

The main office holders of the corporation were Albert B. Scott, president and inventor of the beacon light, and two brothers, Thomas M. and Dushane Hyson. Apparently, Albert B. Scott was not very much involved in the daily operation of the company. It was Thomas M. Hyson, as vice-president, as well as Dushane Hyson, as secretary-treasurer and sometimes sales manager, who actually conducted the daily business. The Hysons seemed to have been quite wealthy due to holdings in real estate, stocks and bonds, in addition to gas and oil leases. In the vein of today's venture capitalist, they provided the start-up capital for APC. Thomas Hyson later furnished the seed money for the Los Angeles Speedway operated by Colonel Hubbard. Neither APC or the Speedway turned out to be profitable enterprises.

Even though there are no records of Dushane Hyson in the collection after 1931, documents of and in regard to Thomas Hyson continue to be numerous. Apparently, he had a

somewhat difficult time during the Depression, having to put up many of his holdings as collateral for much needed loans. It also seems that he had to sell his home to the state for overdue taxes although it was later redeemed.

Other individuals prominently mentioned are Charlotte Hyson; Thomas Hyson's wife, who handled the family's private business affairs; and W.B. Mendenhall, Thomas Hyson's agent and business manager.

Scope and Content

The Aeronautical Products Corporation (APC) collection is arranged into two series. Series 1 covers the years 1920-1946, but primarily includes records directly generated from the business of APC. The second series, 1932 to 1941, is made up of documents produced and received by the principal personalities involved with APC after it became defunct. The documents within each series have been arranged in alphabetical order, each dealing with an agency or person associated with APC. In grouping the records, provenance has been given first consideration.

Series 1 includes both business and private correspondence. In these, the files containing the business correspondence appear first with the files of the private papers coming thereafter.

Series 2 comprises mostly of private documents of the individuals involved with the former APC.

The following files document the evolution of APC:

File 3 – Deals with the organization of APC

File 4 – Contains three California Franchise Tax copies showing the exact date of the incorporation and dissolution. They also show that APC had no gross income in 1929 and 1930, as well as not doing any business in 1931.

File 5 – Deals with workmen compensation and the assignment of Albert B. Scott's patent. It also sheds light on APC's business activities and gives a slice of life of that period.

File 10 – Contains a letter from Bosfort, Hurt, and Schumaker dating the dissolution of APC circa July 1932.

File 17 – Includes a letter from Firestone Tire and Rubber Co., dated January 27, 1930, stating that it would not buy a beacon.

File 23 – Contains the following letters: To Rand, McNally of August 27, 1929, explaining that Sunset Field is not an airfield; To Albert B. Scott, January 28, 1930, suggesting that he seek a patent in Great Britain; to various agencies involving several complaints.

File 44 – Incorporates a notarized testimony, December 4, 1928, in regard to the erection of the first beacon light and a letter of September 2, 1929, presenting the Distinctive Beacon to the people of Cleveland.

These files may furnish some clarification regarding the life of the Hyson family:

- File 21 – Has letters of various private business activities including a letter of August 19, 1929, concerning a delinquent account at the Roosevelt Hotel.
- File 25 – Contains the business card of Thomas M. Hyson. In the same file is a policy from the Pan American Insurance Company that may indicate the approximate age of Thomas Hyson.
- File 26 – Incorporates a letter addressed to the Penn Hotel on August 12, 1929, showing that Dushane is the brother of Thomas Hyson.
- File 27 – Includes a letter to Richard Hile, Los Angeles, stating that W.B. Mendenhall was the agent and business manager of Thomas Hyson.
- File 31 – Consists of photographs of Thomas and Dushane Hyson and their associates.
- File 57 – Contains a maintenance agreement for the perpetual care of a family grave. In this file there is also a letter of April 2, 1932, from Dan C. Smith, attorney, regarding the precarious financial state of an orange grove.
- File 59 – Includes a letter concerning a much needed federal loan
- File 60 – Incorporates a tax receipt of December 5, 1934, showing that real estate had been sold for taxes and later redeemed.
- File 63 – Includes letters indicating the dubious financial status of the Hysons at this time as well as correspondence with Colonel Hubbard in regard to the Los Angeles Speedway.
- File 65 – Contains a letter, dated February 20, 1934, suspending Thomas Hyson from the Redland Country Club.
- File 59, 63, and 66 – Include the Stillion correspondence. These letters are of human interest insofar as they show the relationships of Thomas Hyson with his tenant J.C. Stillion and the latter's effort to evade rent payments.

The following files may be considered to be of historical significance:

- File 6 – Has foreign trade bulletins dealing with the Latin American and Pacific markets. It also contains a sales catalogue listing helmets, goggles, and flight jackets among other items. Of further historical interest is a booklet of flight instructions titled Modern Flight, copyright 1929. The inside cover holds the business card of the flight instructor.
- File 12 – Consists of Department of Commerce bulletins regarding the construction and lighting of modern airports as well as the designing of adequate and safe airports.
- File 25 – Comprises the European itinerary of Thomas and Charlotte Hyson as well as a Pan American insurance form. This insurance, dated 1929, was especially designed for business executives and might have been one of the first of its kind.
- File 30 – Consists of foreign invoices each having at least one foreign receipt stamp (marca da bollo) attached.
- File 34 – Is made up of job applications that give a slice of life of that period.
- File 60 – In general should be of historical importance. Among other items, it

contains a letter of March 31, 1933 from the Iowa Traveling Mens' Association that makes mentions of the bank holiday. Also included are letters from the Stendal Art Gallery of June 28, 1930, and March 31, 1932, anxiously pleading for money indicating the tight financial situation of that time. Dated July 16, 1933, are a bill and tickets, as well as paper badges, for a Sheriff's Relief Fund.

File 62 – Contains two letters written in 1946 to President Truman by the Association of World War II Pilots.

File 67 – Is made up of a pamphlet published by AT&T circa 1941. It deals with the Bell System's war effort in World War II.

Subject Terms:

Persons/Families

Hyson, Dushane
Hyson, Thomas M.
Hyson, Charlotte
Mendenhall, W.B.
Scott, Albert B.

Organizations/Corporate Names

Aeronautical Products Corporation -- History

Places

Hollywood (Los Angeles, Calif.) – Aircraft industry

Subjects (General)

Beacons

Material Types

Correspondence
Photographs
Advertisements
Clippings (information artifacts)
Audiotapes

Occupations

Inventors

Collection Inventory

Series I: Business Records, 1920-1946			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Aero Digest Magazine: Advertisements, service bulletins, Western Aircraft Show, exhibit applications, convention reports, requested payments for overdue bills	1929-1930
	2	Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce: Sponsor of the Second Annual International Aircraft Exposition	1928-1929
	3	Aeronautical Products Corporation: Papers indicating the organization, financing, and hierarchy of APC	1929
	4	Aeronautical Products Corporation Correspondence	1920-1931
	5	Aeronautical Products Corporation Correspondence received	1929-1932
	6	Aeronautical Products Corporation Assorted catalogues	1927-1931
	7	Aeronautical Products Corporation Business literature	1929-1946
	8	Aeronautical Products Corporation Photos, 15 prints of the beacon light	1929
	9	Austin Company Correspondence	1929
	10	Bortsford, Hurt, and Schumaker Correspondence	1929-1932
	11	<i>Cleveland Plain Dealer</i> : Newspaper clippings	1929
	12	Department of Commerce: Various bulletins	1928-1931
	13	Department of Commerce: Literature regarding bidders and policies; list of aeronautical schools	1929-1931
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	
2	14	Department of Commerce: Correspondence	1929-1931
	15	Grand Central Terminal: Correspondence	1930
	16	Department of Commerce: Photos, 13 Prints – 5 negatives	1929
	17	Firestone Tire and Rubber Company Correspondence	1929-1930
	18	Flintridge County Club Correspondence	1930-1936
	19	Friel, Grant (Sales Manager) Correspondence	1929-1930

	20	Hyson, Charlotte Correspondence	1930-1932
	21	Hyson, Charlotte Correspondence received	1929-1931
	22	Hyson, Dushane, Sales Manager, Correspondence. There are several duplicates of promotional letters in this file either because of marginal notes or because they are addressed to close-by communities.	1929-1930
	23	Hyson, Dushane, Secretary, Correspondence	1929-1931
	24	Hyson, Dushane, Treasurer, Correspondence	1929-1949
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	
2	25	Hyson, Thomas M.: Itinerary, Pan American Insurance policy	1929-1931
	26	Hyson, Thomas M. Business Correspondence	1922-1932
	27	Hyson, Thomas M. Business Correspondence	1931
	28	Hyson, Thomas M. Personal Correspondence	1929-1930
	29	Hyson, Thomas M. Personal Correspondence received	1930-1932
	30	Hyson, Thomas M. Invoices from Italian and Parisian shops	1931
	31	Hyson, Thomas M. Photos, Austin hanger, 9 prints – 6 negatives	Undated
	32	Hyson, Thomas M. Photos, T.M. Hyson in front of General Tire airplane, 2 prints – 2 negatives	Undated
	33	Hyson, Thomas M. Photos, T.M. Hyson at Sunset Field, 2 prints	Undated
	34	Hyson, Thomas M. Job Applications	1929-1930
	35	<u>Los Angeles Examiner</u> Newspaper clippings	1929
	36	<u>Los Angeles Times</u> Newspaper clippings	1929-1930
	37	Mendenhall, W.B. Personal correspondence for T.M. Hyson	1929-1932
	38	Mendenhall, W.B. Correspondence concerning APC	1929-1931
	39	Mendenhall, W.B. Correspondence received	1931
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	
3	40	National Air Race Exposition, Cleveland, 1929: Correspondence, floor diagram, rules regarding attendance, list of exhibitors	1929
	41	Newspaper clippings: <u>Hollywood News</u> , <u>Los Angeles Evening Examiner</u>	1929
	42	Articles from the Los Angeles Examiner	1929-1930
	43	Redland Water Co. Correspondence	1931-1932
	44	Scott, Albert B. Correspondence, beacon light specifications,	1928-1930

		penciled copy of notarized testimony regarding the erection of the first beacon	
3	45	Scott, Albert B. Correspondence received	1929
	46	Scott, Albert B. Testimonies of pilots regarding the beacon	1929
	47	Second Annual Aircraft Exposition, St. Louis, 1930 Advertisement	1930
	48	Suess, J.J. Millie Correspondence with Charlotte Hyson	1930-1932
	49	Western Aircraft Show Correspondence	1929
	50	Western Aircraft Show: Photos of beacon on the grounds of show, 8 prints	1929
	51	Western Aircraft Show: Photos of APC booth, 7 prints	Undated
	52	Wilkshire Common-wealth Corporation Correspondence	1931
Series II: Post Business Records, 1932-1941			
<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	
3	53	Bank of America Correspondence	1933
	54	City of Redland Correspondence	1932-1939
	55	First Trust and Savings Bank Correspondence	1932-1935
	56	C.J. Gibson Co. Correspondence	1934-1935
	57	Hyson, Charlotte Correspondence	1932-1939
	58	Hyson, Charlotte Correspondence received	1932-1938
	59	Hyson, Thomas M. Correspondence	1932-1939
	60	Hyson, Thomas M. Correspondence received	1932-1938
	61	Jonathan Club Correspondence	1933-1934
	62	Association of World War II Pilot: Letters to President Truman	1946
	63	Mendenhall, W.B. Correspondence	1932-1941
	64	Mendenhall, W.B. Correspondence received	1932
	65	Redland Country Club Correspondence	1933-1934
	66	Stillion, J.C. Correspondence	1934-1939
	67	AT&T Pamphlet: <u>All Out for Defense</u>	Undated
	68	Mongin Research Correspondence	Undated